A

SEVENTH LETTER

FROM

The FARMER,

TO THE

FREE and INDEPENDENT ELECTORS of the CITY of DUBLIN.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A SEVENTH

LETTER

FROM

The FARMER, &c.

My Friends and Brothers,

AS I moſt heartily wiſh you to be a happy People, it is the preſent Bent of my Labours, as it ſhall be of my future Studies, to contribute all I can to that deſirable End.

WERE it my Opinion that your Happineſs conſiſted in the Abundance of the Things You poſſeſs, that your Enjoyments would increaſe in proportion to your Acquiſitions, and that *Riches* were any ſolid Foundation for Content; I would firſt have opened the Mines of *Agriculture*, and have endeavoured to widen the Chanels of your *Trade*.

BUT as I am firmly perſuaded of the Reverſe of all this. As I apprehend that the Poſſeſſions of many among us have already debauched and made miſerable their Proprietors. That ſuch Examples have ſpread their Contagion abroad. That *Affluence* propagates *Luxury*, Luxury *Immorality*, and Immorality the Seeds of *Slavery* throughout my Country. I would ſooner ſteer you *eaſtward*, while your Port lay *Weſt*, than lead you to the Danger and Temptation of Riches; till you are firſt duly informed, and wiſely determined on ſuch a Uſe and Application thereof, as can alone derive any Benefit or Advantage to the Poſſeſſor.

WEALTH, my dear Friends, is as a Cup of Liquor whoſe Quality would conform to the Conſtitution of him who drinks it; It carries Health, Strength, and Nouriſhment to the Lips of Temperance and Virtue; but utter Poiſon to an Appetite that is thirſty and inflamed. The good Things of Life are good to Thoſe who are good alone; the Evil convert them into their own Nature and Quality. Nothing can be *valuable* but ſo far as it is *uſeful*; the *Abuſe* therefore of *Riches* muſt make their Owners *poor* indeed.

In Juſtice and in Truth, I might proceed much further. I might ſhew you, that, however Wealth, and Power, and Conſideration, may ſerve to illuſtrate the *Virtue* of their Proprietor; they were never yet the Fountain or the Occaſion *thereof*. That, ſince the World begun, the *Soul* of Man, which is *Himſelf*, hath neither been made *temperate* by *Affluence*, *kind* by *Authority*, nor *humble* by *Honours*. That ſuch Acquiſitions in their Nature rather tend, to *deduct*, than to *add* real Value to their Owner. That they are a Weight which cannot be *ſupported* but by an equal *Strength* of Mind; and that, though the *Structure* of *Wealth*, and *Power*, and *Conſideration*, may contain many Elegancies and Conveniences in the Apartments, unleſs they are deeply and ſtrongly pillar'd on *Virtue*, they muſt entomb under their Ruins all Thoſe who dwell within.

If *Wealth* therefore is not the *One Thing needful*, whatever the Practice and Purſuits of Mankind may aſſert. If univerſal Hiſtory, Experience, and Obſervation, prove that Riches have a Tendency, to corrupt, enſlave and ruin whole Nations as well as Men. If thoſe Commonwealths, who are allowed to have been the happieſt, the greateſt, and the moſt diſtinguiſhed upon Earth, were yet eſtabliſhed upon the *Principles* of *Poverty* and *Temperance*. If they *ſubſiſted* no longer than while they adhered to thoſe *Principles*; and that *Riches* introduced a *Diſſolution of Manners*, and a Diſſolution of their Manners a Diſſolution of the State. There is ſomething further requiſite, beyond a *wealthy Dependence* (whatever your *Time-ſerving Preachers* may inſinuate) to build up a Proſperity that can poſſibly endure; to make

you

you a People worthy, or even ſuſceptible of *Happineſs.*

I LOOK for no temporal Preferment by theſe my Labours; it is enough that your Intereſt calls upon me; for that I quit Concerns that are more perſonal, though leſs dear; and neither Fears, nor Hopes, nor Proſpects, nor Prohibitions, ſhall ever ſhut my Mouth on a Word that may be uttered to your Advantage: Much leſs ſhall any Influence be able to prevail with me, to publiſh a ſingle Expreſſion pernicious to my Country, a Sentiment that will not equally and in all Places ſtand the light-armed and deſpiſed Aſſaults of Raillery, as well as the Teſt of Reaſon and Inquiſition of Time.

IN my private Concerns, Indiſcretion, Extravagance, Raſhneſs, Folly are often imputed to me: Diſhoneſty, Inſincerity, Malevolence.———Never. In my public Concerns, I have, in Turns, provoked and pleaſed all Parties; becauſe all Parties, in their Turns, are for and againſt Truth. But, who can ſtand up, and ſay? That I have at any time deviated from what I was at the Beginning; or that any Two of my Sentiments or Aſſertions have ever claſhed? No Favour, no Intereſt hath tempted me to the Right or to the Left. I have but one Road to travel, and that leads but to one View; to the Good, to the Happineſs of my beloved Country! and O, that I could expand that View——— to the Happineſs of Mankind!

I SPEAK not this in the Spirit of Vanity, or to catch the paſſing Breath of a popular Acclamation. I know how weak the human Heart is to the Approaches of Honours; and therefore pray to deſerve

ſerve, but never to acquire them. But I ſpeak this as a Challenge directed to all my *Enemies*, to thoſe *Maſters* of the *ſcurrilous Science of Offence*, who yet are *Strangers to Argument*, and *Aliens to Truth*. I ſpeak it for your own Sakes, that I may have Credit among you; that in a Matter of the laſt Conſequence to yourſelves and to your Poſterity, You may know that I cannot have any Proſpect in betraying you, not the ſmalleſt or moſt diſtant Intention to deceive.

PARDON therefore a few Sentences that were otherwiſe impertinent; that, in order to introduce a Concern of the utmoſt Importance, I have detain'd you on a Subject ſo inconſiderable, as myſelf.

THIS Concern, of the laſt Conſequence, of the utmoſt Importance to You, is no leſs than the WHOLE of what you are or can be worth. It is your HAPPINESS, my Brethren, however it may be conſidered, as *natural*, *civil*, *political*, *temporal*, or *eternal*. However various, and even oppoſite, the *Objects* of our *Purſuits* may be; HAPPINESS is the only *Game* intended by the *Chaſe*. It is not therefore the chief, it is the ſingle Conſideration that ought to claim your Attention; and I lay it down as a Poſition, for I ſhall prove it inconteſtably, that both *here* and *hereafter*, in *Heaven* and on *Earth*, LIBERTY is to HAPPINESS as the *Bones* are to the *Body*, the only *Support* on which the Whole is *built*; or as *Life* is to Thought, Action, and all the other Faculties, the *Source* from whence they ariſe, and without which they cannot ſubſiſt.

To let you know what LIBERTY is, and wherein it conſiſts; leſt when ſome *cry it is here*, You ſhould be influenced to liſten, or when others *cry it is yonder*, You ſhould be tempted to attend; was the Purpoſe, as I hope it will be the Effect, of my laſt Letter. But as the Proofs, then neceſſary to obviate future Cavils and Aſſaults, led me into a Train of Argument not perceivable at one View; I will here give you a ſhort Sum of the ſeveral Inferences; a plain Syſtem of the Truths independent of their Demonſtrations.

PERFECT LIBETY *is the Privilege of a voluntary Conduct directed by Wiſdom and limited by Duty.*

IN *Nature* it is the Co-operation of *Will*, right *Reaſon*, and good Conſcience—in *Policy*, of *Conſent*, prudent *Law*, and juſt *Magiſtracy*; and in Proportion as Any or All of Theſe are deficient, in ſuch Proportion is Liberty depraved, or wholly loſt.

IF *one Man* is ſubdued to the Appointments of another, though ſuch Appointments ſhould never deviate from *right Reaſon* or *good Conſcience*, the *Will* is yet wanting to *natural Freedom*———If a *Conſtitution* of Men ſhould be governed by *wiſe Laws* and *juſt Magiſtrates*; if thoſe Laws ſhould yet be formed, and thoſe Magiſtrates preferred, without the Concurrence or Agreement of the Populace; *Conſent* is then wanting to *ſocial Liberty*.

THE next Step to *natural Slavery*, is, where a *Man* is ſubdued againſt his Will, to the *unreaſonable* and *unjuſt Appointments* of Another——The next Step to *Political Slavery*, where a *Conſtitution* is ſubjected without Conſent *to weak or partial Laws*, and *iniquitous Magiſtrates*.

BUT the laſt Degree of Slavery, is, where the *Will* itſelf co-operates, with the Appointments of *Folly*, and Suggeſtions of *Guilt*. For where private Reaſon and Conſcience are ſtifled by Luſts, the very Will is ſeduced to the Empire of Appetite, and the whole Man becomes the Subject and Servant of Sin——Where the Populace are influenced to a voluntary Election of weak Legiſlators or vitiated Magiſtrates; *Conſent*, which is *the Salt of Liberty*, is then itſelf *corrupted*, and no Salt may be found wherewith it can be ſeaſoned; The People are Parties and Abettors to their own Thraldom, and no Powers upon Earth can, nor will Heaven interfere, to redeem them from ſo merited, ſo ſure a Perdition.

REASON, Conſcience, and Strength, were appointed unto Man, that by *Reaſon* he might *diſtinguiſh Right*, by *Conſcience* be *controuled from Wrong*, and by *Strength aſſert* his Privileges, and *repel* or *puniſh* the Encroacher——Law, Magiſtracy, and Power, were appointed to Society, that *Law* might *declare Right*, *Magiſtracy guard from Wrong*, and *Power aſſert* the Limits, or *repel* and *puniſh* the Invaders.

The End of the Creation of Man is anſwered by *good or virtuous Conduct*: *The End of the Creation of Society* is anſwered by *good or virtuous Government*.

THE Force of a *ſtronger Arm* may *oppoſe* the *good Conduct* of Man——The Invaſion of *greater Powers*

may *oppoſe* the *good Government* of a People.——— But *Force* in either Caſe infers *no Guilt*; and the Will is ſtill left Free, *to attempt once more for Liberty.*

THE *Will* of Man can be conſtrained by no outward Impulſe, He muſt firſt be *guilty* before he can be *perverted* —— The *Conſent* of a People can be compelled by no outward Power. They muſt firſt be *corrupted* before they can be *influenced.*

Temptation in the *natural World* is *Influence* in the *Political World.* The *Surrender of free Will* is what conſtitutes a *ſinful Man*——The *Surrender of free Conſent* is what demonſtrates a *wicked People.* No *Man* therefore can be *good* but ſo far as he is *free*—No *People* can be *free* but ſo far as they are *virtuous.*

BUT, my Friends, this Principle of LIBERTY is not merely HUMAN, It is alſo DIVINE. In the *natural*, in the *Political*, in the *Moral* World, it is by LIBERTY that we *retain*, *apply*, or *enjoy* any *Poſſeſſion.*

IT is therefore, alone, that we are accountable Creatures. It is for LIBERTY only that we can be brought to our Audit, before Man or before GOD, either here or hereafter.

WHATEVER is propertied, whatever is poſſeſſed, whatever Induſtry can earn, or Opulence purchaſe, is granted, fenced, guarded, and affirmed by LIBERTY.

WHATEVER is juſt, whatever is decent, whatever is humane, whatever is charitable, whatever is great, whatever is good, whatever is ſacred; to the Breach of which eternal Puniſhments are threatened,

to the Performance of which eternal Happineſs is ordained, take their Riſe, Temper, Quality and Merit from LIBERTY.

As the SOUL of Man was created in the IMAGE of GOD; it is from LIBERTY that this DIVINE SIMILITUDE is denominated, where *Man's Freedom* of Acting according to the Dictates of his own *finite Reaſon*, anſwers to GOD's FREEDOM of acting according to the Dictates of his own INFINITE WISDOM.

Now as All receive their Exiſtence and Appointments from GOD, He cannot poſſibly be ſuſceptible of Influence from Any, and therefore, is neceſſarily, infinitely, and eternally free. That is to ſay, He cannot in any one Inſtance, of his unbounded Operations, do otherwiſe, than act as Infinite Wiſdom ſhall dictate, and infinite Goodneſs direct. Throughout his Immenſity, he can ſurrender no one Article of his Attributes or Powers. He cannot be Fooliſh, He cannot be Evil, He cannot be Impotent. And this alone is PERFECT UNASSAILABLE FREEDOM.

HE, then, who would preſerve the DIVINITY of that IMAGE in which he is created; who would be truly GODLIKE, who would be GOOD, who would be HAPPY, muſt endeavour to be *Steady*, *Impregnable*, *Unaſſailable*. He muſt combat and conquer the Friends of *Influence* who are within him, that they may not be able to correſpond abroad, and betray him to this his *mighty Beſieger*. His *imperial Soul* muſt preſerve that Throne of Reaſon, to which it was, from Eternity, ordained by the ALMIGHTY; to keep under due Subjection and Miniſtration, thoſe Senſes, thoſe Affections, thoſe Appetites, that were appointed his natural Servants——not his Lords.

SHOULD theſe, the *Earth-born Giants* of *Senſuality* and *Appetite*, be able to ſcale that CELESTIAL SEAT OF FREEDOM wherein the DIVINITY of Man is ſcepter'd; what Aſylum, what Reſource? what Corner may be found, throughout the Univerſe, wherein the *degraded Monarch* may hide his ſhameful Head?

AND yet it is from theſe, his natural Vaſſals alone, the Domeſtics and Miniſters of his own Houſehold, that the World can produce any thing that is formidable to Man. From their Rebellion alone comes *human Guilt* and *human Miſery*: On their Subjection alone is built *human Virtue* and *human Happineſs*. While they are retained within the Sphere of their appointed Obedience, though their LORD ſhould ſee the World in Chains, or in Flames around him, He would ſtand *free*, amidſt Dungeons, Tyrants, and Slaves; and *ſafe*, amidſt Terrors, Tortures, and Death.

THESE, my dear Brothers, are no ſudden Flights, no Doctrines that ought to be new or ſtrange unto Men. They are no other than the Unfoldings of thoſe Truths that are within You, the Tranſcripts of the original Tables that are written in your own Boſoms.

THE DIVINE REVEALER of the Means of Salvation unto Man, who hath brought IMMORTALITY and FREEDOM to Light by his Goſpel, aſſures you that the KINGDOM OF GOD, which is LIBERTY, is neither relative to any Time, nor aſſigned to any Place, that it is opened and eſtabliſhed in the Soul alone, that it is the LAW OF REASON AND CONSCIENCE written by GOD upon your Hearts, and that this LAW alone is PERFECT FREEDOM.

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EVEN in old Times, the moſt illuminated of the Poets and Philoſophers have had ſeveral Glimmerings of this the full Day of LIBERTY, which by the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is now ſhed upon Mankind.

HEAR the Sentiments of an ancient *Roman* upon this Head.

THE Man, reſolv'd, and ſteady to his Truſt,
Inflexible to Ill, and obſtinately Juſt,
May the rude Rabble's Inſolence deſpiſe,
Their ſenſeleſs Clamours, and tumultuous Cries;
The Tyrant's Fierceneſs he beguiles,
And the ſtern Brow and the harſh Voice defies,
And with ſuperior Greatneſs——ſmiles!

NOT the rude Whirlwind, that deforms
Adria's black Gulph, and vexes it with Storms,
Can the firm Purpoſe of his Soul remove,
Not the red Arm of angry *Jove*,
That flings the Thunder from the Sky,
And gives it Rage to roar, and Strength to fly.

SHOULD the whole Frame of Nature round him break,
In Ruin and Confuſion, hurl'd,
He, unconcern'd, would hear the mighty Crack,
FREE, and ſecure, amid a tumbling World.

HUMAN Freedom and human Exiſtence are ſo intimately joined, that Exiſtence becomes Miſery, is worſe than Loſs and Annihilation, when Freedom its only Solace and Support is departed. *For what ſhould it profit a Man were he to gain the whole World, if he loſes that, by which any thing can be retained or enjoyed, if he loſes his* LIBERTY, *his* SOUL, *his* SELF.

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As far as we ſubmit to any evil Influence, ſo far we permit ourſelves to be deprived of our LIBERTY, the GREAT and DIVINE CONSTITUENT of our immortal Nature and immortal Happineſs: So far we ſink under the Tyranny of Senſuality and Sin, and grow alien and diſtant from the SOURCE of all Exiſtence, from the GIVER of all Delight.

BUT ſo far as we retain, cheriſh, and ſtrengthen this INFANT IMAGE of the DEITY within us; ſo far we ariſe above Corruption and Mortality, earthly Potentates and Powers; we kindle in our Speed and Force, as we draw nearer to the SPHERE of our DIVINE ACTIVITY; we approach to our GOD by our *approaching Similitude*, and one Flight higher makes all *inconceivable! inexpreſſible!*

IF any of your ſophiſtical Fencers, your modern Champions for Slavery, ſhould here attempt to diſtinguiſh between *perſonal* and *ſocial* LIBERTY, ſhould allow you to retain *perſonal Liberty*, which is the *Virtue of Yourſelves*, but perſuade you to part with *ſocial Liberty* which is the *Virtue of your Country*: Remember, that I have already demonſtrated, as clear as Light; that no Man can ſurrender his Country to *weak* or *vicious Rulers*, till he has firſt ſurrendered himſelf a Servant to *Sin*; that no Man can be *influenced*, till he is previouſly *corrupted*.

THE only Difference between the Surrender of *perſonal* and *ſocial Liberty*, is, inaſmuch as the *latter* is more extended and important, by ſo much more the Crime is expanded and encreas'd.

FOR as *ſocial* or *political Liberty* is nothing elſe but the Combination and Aſſertion of *perſonal Liberty*, the Vindication of that great Privilege to a whole People, whereto every Individual continues to be intitled; whoever attempts to diſpoſe, ſurrender, or betray any Branch, Portion, or Particle of this divine Poſſeſſion,

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is not only guilty of what that wicked Wretch ſhould commit, who would ſell his Soul under abſolute Bondage to Luſt, or make a voluntary Sacrifice of his own Reaſon, to the blind, precarious and arbitrary Will of Another; his Crimes are infinitely more numerous, his Guilt infinitely more extenſive, and differs as far as a Man is out-number'd by Nations, or a ſingle Life by all the Ages that ſhall roll down through Poſterity.

IT may laſtly be objected, that ſince it is poſſible for a ſingle Man, in the midſt of Slaves and ſurrounding Tyrants, to retain this LIBERTY OF SOUL; to ſtand *uninfluenced*, *independent*, *unaſſailable*, FREE, in Spite of Shackles and Dungeons, of Tortures and of Death: Why may not any Man, and therefore every Man, ſupport an equal Virtue? And then, of what Conſequence would *national Slavery* be, to ſuch FREE, *heroic* and *ſuperior Individuals?*

I ANSWER, that beſide this LIBERTY OF SOUL, which a depraved Will may ſurrender, but which no Force can take away; there is alſo a *Liberty of Body* and *of Property*, which, though *they* extend not beyond the Limits of the Grave, make the *Comforts* and *Conveniencies* of this State of Mortality. *Theſe* are ever obnoxious to Power and to Policy; *here* Strength may effectually batter, and Cunning undermine; and if their Value is not equivalent to ſome little Contention for their Preſervation while we hold them, or their Recovery when loſt, I know nothing upon Earth worthy of a ſingle Struggle, or even a Thought.

BUT, further; the *Liberty* of Property, and the *Liberty* of Perſon, are the very Out-works of the GREAT CITADEL the LIBERTY OF THE SOUL. There is an intimate Connection and Correſpondence between them. If the Outworks are once taken, the

the Citadel is endangered, and will require an internal Strength and Watchfulneſs that is extraordinary, to defend itſelf from the cloſe Attacks of perpetual Aſſailants.

WHO would chuſe to have himſelf or his Brethren ſo tempted or expoſed?

IF one Man ſhould be ſtrong enough to ſtrip another of his Property, and, thereafter, to put his Body into actual Bondage; he wants but a Step further to the enſlaving of his VERY SOUL, to make it gradually bend, become obſequious and ſubſervient, and at length even conformable, to the Dictates of Luſt, and the Appointments of Villainy.

WHEN the Devil deſired to tempt the FREEMAN of the Eaſt, even JOB the favourite IMAGE of his bleſſed CREATOR; he firſt attached his Property, and next attached his Perſon, that by coming ſo near as to his Fleſh and to his Bone, he might reach at the TREASURE OF ETERNAL ESTIMATION, the DIVINITY, that held the Throne within. But here he happened for once to be miſtaken in his Man, *Job* held faſt his LIBERTY, he would not let it go, and the World and the Devil aſſailed him in vain.

F I N I S.

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